

# Nevada Department of Agriculture News Release



**For Immediate Release  
For More Information  
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## Nevada Horse Owners Should Vaccinate Animals Before Spring Mosquito Hatch

West Nile Virus first showed up in the United States in August 1999. Since then it has made its way across the country to every state except Oregon, Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. Officials at the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDOA) believe that West Nile Virus will reach Nevada this summer.

Taking a proactive approach, NDOA is urging horse owners to get their animals vaccinated for West Nile Virus as soon as possible. With an unseasonably warm winter and little rainfall, this year's initial mosquito hatch is likely to occur early. Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile Virus when they feed on infected birds, which may circulate the virus in their blood for a few days. After an incubation period of 5 to 15 days, infected mosquitoes can then transmit West Nile Virus to horse, humans and birds when feeding.

Timing is everything as far as this vaccination goes. It takes two shots, a primary and a booster, then three to six weeks for the vaccination to take effect. If horse owners do not get this vaccination now, they are taking a gamble that their horse will not become infected if West Nile Virus shows up. The virus is 100% fatal to certain groups of birds and about 40% of horses that become ill with West Nile Virus die if left untreated. Vaccinating your horse properly will protect your horse 95% of the time.

If you would like more information on West Nile Virus visit the Nevada Department of Agriculture's website at <http://agri.state.nv.us/westnile> . To report dead birds, or anything else related to animal health, call NDOA at 775-688-1182.

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